

## DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR  
KENT WHEELER KENNAN**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Kent Wheeler Kennan, professor emeritus, music, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary  
The General Faculty

**IN MEMORIAM  
KENT WHEELER KENNAN**

Kent Wheeler Kennan, internationally known composer, author, music educator, and professor emeritus of music theory and composition at The University of Texas at Austin, died in Austin on November 1, 2003. He is survived by his half-brother, George F. Kennan, the noted author, historian, diplomat, and Russian expert, and by several nephews, nieces and their children.

Professor Kennan was born on April 18, 1913, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He demonstrated musical talent at an early age, beginning piano lessons at the age of six, and organ and flute studies shortly thereafter. He received his degrees in music from the University of Michigan and the Eastman School of Music in composition and music theory. At the age of 23, he was awarded one of the most coveted prizes in music, the Prix de Rome. This allowed him to study for three years in Europe, primarily at the American Academy in Rome.

Except for a brief teaching stint at Kent State University and two years at The Ohio State University during the 1950s, Professor Kennan's teaching career was spent at The University of Texas at Austin. He was one of the last surviving members of the original six-member faculty of the College of Fine Arts created in 1940 under the leadership of Dean William F. Doty. He served the University, the college, and the School of Music in both teaching and administrative capacities during his forty years of academic service, retiring in 1983. His forty years of devotion to the School of Music and the College of Fine Arts were recognized in May 2001, when the College of Fine Arts bestowed upon him its highest honor, the E. William Doty Award. The Doty Award recognizes individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to education, to arts and society, and to the college and the University. This was only one of his many awards that he openly displayed.

Professor Kennan's compositions include works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, and solo instrument as well as songs and choral music. One of his best-known works, "Night Soliloquy," has been performed by every major orchestra in the country under such distinguished conductors as Toscanini, Ormandy, Stokowski, and Ozawa. It has been recorded on six different labels and is considered a staple of the flute repertory. Several other works, such as his "Sonata for Trumpet and Piano," "Three Pieces for Orchestra," and "Three Piano Preludes," are also widely performed and recorded. In addition to his original compositions, Professor Kennan made highly-regarded transcriptions of sonatas by both Brahms and Prokofiev. His transcription of the Prokofiev flute sonata for clarinet and orchestra has been performed and commercially recorded by leading clarinetist Richard Stolzman. In a decision that puzzled friends and admirers, Professor Kennan composed his last major work in 1956 at the age of 43 and opted to abandon composition. From then on, he wrote only occasional small pieces and chose to devote himself to teaching and educational writing. Even so, the strength and expressivity of his early works earned him a deserved status as one of the most important American composers of the first half of the twentieth century. At Kennan's death, Peter Bay (conductor of the Austin Symphony) said of him, "Kent, like his music, was direct, honest and expressive, and he was overly modest about his numerous accomplishments. His music and dedication to the education of musicians will keep his legacy alive well beyond his earthbound years."

Professor Kennan's two books, "Counterpoint" and "The Technique of Orchestration," are widely regarded as the best and most authoritative treatments of these subjects in English. Both have been in continuous use for more than forty-five years and have been the most widely used texts in their fields for decades.

Kent Kennan was as generous with his resources as he was with his time and talent. He was a charter member and benefactor of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin and devoted countless hours to that organization as a pianist in its early years. He was a strong supporter of KMFA (Austin's Classical Radio Station) and on occasion spent time manning the phones during pledge drives. The Kent Kennan Endowed Graduate Fellowship in Music Composition or Theory supported numerous music theory and composition students during his life, and part of his legacy includes a substantial scholarship endowment to the University's School of Music for composition and theory students. This will undoubtedly ensure the association of his name with the School of Music for future generations of musicians educated at The University of Texas at Austin.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Donald Grantham (chair), Martha Hilley, and Dan Welcher.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Natural Sciences, the executive vice president and provost, and the president on June 14, 2004. Copies are available on request from the Office of the General Faculty, FAC 22, F9500. This resolution is posted under "Memorials" at: <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/>.